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Disaster News

FREE BREATHING MASKS AVAILABLE TO S. CALIFORNIANS

PASADENA, Calif. — The Governor's Office of Emergency Services today announced the availability of free breathing masks for Southern Californians to use while cleaning up ash around their home or business. The masks, donated by Cardinal Health and delivered free of charge by UPS, will be available at any of the nine local assistance centers that were announced by Governor Schwarzenegger last week.

State and public health officials recommend that anyone cleaning up ash from around their home or spending time in ash-covered areas wear at a minimum a well-fitted paper mask or bandana to protect their nose and mouth. Keeping skin covered by wearing long sleeves, full length pants and gloves is also recommended. Special protections such as N95 or P100 respirators are recommended to help protect the lungs from ash and soot if spending long periods of time sifting through a site. Individuals with pre-existing heart and lung conditions should seek advice from their physician regarding use of special protections.

The local assistance centers were opened last week to serve as efficient one-stop sources for disaster relief services including information on how to replace records lost in the fires, file insurance claims and apply for assistance and housing. A wide range of state, federal, and local agencies are represented at the centers.

"With 5,000 employees and major operations across the state of California, we are well aware of the impact from the wildfires and are pleased to assist in the recovery efforts that are already underway in Southern California," said R. Kerry Clark, chief executive officer of Cardinal Health.

FEMA coordinates the federal government's role in preparing for, preventing, mitigating the effects of, responding to, and recovering from all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made, including acts of terror.

The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) coordinates overall state-agency response to major disasters in support of local government. OES is also responsible for maintaining the State Emergency Plan and coordinating the California's preparedness, mitigation and recovery efforts.

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